Socialist Worker
Banks Dispute Special 20/3/92 5p

HATCHET MAN

BRIAN Wilson, the Group General Manager of the AIB is aiming to become the William Martin Murphy of the 1990s.

Just as Murphy led his fellow employers in Dublin in 1913, Mr Brian Wilson wants to give a lead on intimidation today.

Wilson has previously worked with the AIB in Britain. There he picked up his Thatcherite fantasies about trampling over workers rights.

He tried to smash the IBOA in that country and now he is back in Ireland trying to do the same.

DEFEND THE I.B.O.A.

No to longer hours in the banks

PAY THE CLAIM!

THE big banks are out to break the Irish Bank Official Association. They want to have late opening in the banks to 4 pm. They want the banks open for lunch break. And they believe that the only way they are going to get this is to smash the union.

That has now become the central issue in the current bank dispute.

The top bank managers will pretend that this is not the case. They have been putting out staff newsletters over the last few weeks with lots of talk about INTEGRITY.

Here is a sample from the AIB. They claimed that:

Values

"AIB staff have been placed in a position of choosing between their own values of integrity and honesty and adherance to the law of the land on one hand and support for the IBOA directive on the other."

This is pure hypocrisy:

INTEGRITY: Where is the "integrity" in starting off bank officials salaries on £8,200 in the AIB and £7,600 in the Bank of Ireland. Young bank officials today are coming out with less than £120 a week. They cannot live on these low wages.

HONESTY: The banks talk a lot about "intimidation". But it is the top bank management who are now engaged in wholescale intimidation of their staff.

In some offices they are calling in workers for one to one interviews. Warnings are been given about an end to promotion prospects, no transfers,no permission to take a year's leave.

In one case, staff were called in for a breakfast meeting only to be lectured on their duties to the bank. (They ate the breakfast and told management where to get off)

In other cases, management have sought to get the addresses and telephone numbers of staff so that they can phone them over weekends to pressurise them to scab.

IBOA members should resist this intimidation and see through the bank propaganda.

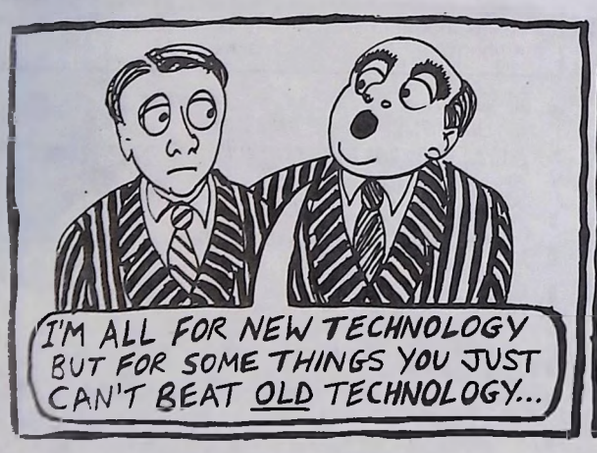
THE IBOA are demanding a 6.5% pay rise. They want it backdated to May 1990. It is perfectly justifiable.

Banks have been making big profits in recent years before the recesion. They were able to do this because they managed to get rid of jobs paying £20,000 a year and replaced them with jobs paying less than £10,000.

The top managers who preach about loyalty to the company know how to look after themselves.

In 1989, top management awarded itself 24%. Now they are trying to say that a bank worker on a miserable £120 a week in not entitled to an increase that is less than £10.

Top management in the Banks earn more in a month than many young officials do in a whole year. On those wages they know a lot about hypocrisy.



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How the I.B.O.A. can win

IN order to win, the IBOA is going to have to be as tough as the banks. This is a major battle that it cannot afford to lose.

Unfortunately, there are signs of weakness. IBOA General Secretary sent a circular to members on the 12 March.

There he acknowledged that "many staff are most anxious to come out immediately in support of their suspended colleagues".

But he went on to say "please be patient and and remember that it is preferrable for the association to act in a planned way at its own pace"

There is a major problem with this strategy. It is NOT the IBOA who are doing the planning,it is the banks.

It is the banks who pick the battle ground. They choose ***SELECTIVE SUSPENSIONS*** in the branches and carefully avoid suspending people in the administrative centres which could close the whole banking network down.

The IBOA are ***REACTING*** because they only put pickets on where the AIB choose to give battle.

But if we are to win there are a number of obvious things that need to be done:

- We have to escalate the action and take the offensive to management. The administrative centres of the major banks need to be picketted out. Why is Donnybrook House which is the centre which processes cheques in the AIB allowed to operate while the bank tries to intimidate IBOA members?
- We should be targetting areas where the banks are making big profits. Bank workers in the Financial Services Centre in Dublin have held enthusiastic meetings on the strikes. The banks would be really hit if dealing was closed down here.
- Securicor people are crossing pickets of the AIB. They say that their union SIPTU have told them to work normally. The IBOA should make an open appeal to SIPTU members to respect their pickets.
- The banks hope that they can survive a strike with new technology and the ATMs. They forget that computers need people. The computer staff in the IBOA should be called out. There should be mass pockets on the computer centres.
- The IBOA should be calling regular meeting so that members can discuss and come to an agreement themselves on how the strike should be conducted. Members should not be treated as passive fodder who simply obey directives.

Ciaran Ryan was formerly an official for the employers organisation, the FIE. He may still imagine that this is all a gentlemanly contest between professional negotiators. Our General Secretary should be told: it is time to take the gloves off.

Management preparations

THE banks have been planning their offensive for some time.

These plans have been kept secret but now the full extent of their plans are coming out into the open:

- Bank of Ireland have drafted in 200 people for stand by duty over the last few months. They hope to use these as a scab force if necessary.
- Managers who have been broken from the IBOA are been shifted around the bank departments to organise scabbing operations
- regular staff meetings are being called for the staff after the banks issue their newsletters. The aim is to break morale and identify people who can be won away from the union.
- the banks PR firm has been working full time trying to plant stories in the papers about "greedy" bank workers and divisions in the unions.

All these preparations show just why the IBOA must now begin to organise a much harder fight.

Don't let the banks away with a 20% pay cut

BANK of Ireland, National Irish Bank and Ulster Bank have begun to implement their 20% pay cut on workers who support the IBOA directive of not collecting fees.

The banks have already said publically that they are going to recover these charges from customers—but they are still going to impose a pay cut.

The banks must not be let get away with this. Unfortunately, the IBOA response has been weak in the extreme. Members have been told that the union has commenced legal proceedings against the banks to recover the money.

But it is very unlikely that the courts will order the banks to pay up. There should have been an immediate escalation of the action to counter the banks ation.

The ugly face of capitalism

SOME years ago, the Irish banks urged their staff to stay open at weekends to take in money for the Live Aid benefit which was geared to raising money for famine relief.

The employees obliged out of a basic humanitarian instinct. What the Irish banks never said however was that they were heavily involved in squeezing money out of Africa to pay off their rotten international debts.

These debts are one of the main reasons why Africa starve. In recent years one quarter that of the export earning of Africa goes to pay off their international debt to the world banks.

The missing money could have been used to eliminate cholera, to purchase fertilisers to improve the soil, to invest in tractors to increase harvests.

Debt

For every £1 raised in famine relief during the great Live Aid concert organised by Bob Geldoff for Ethiopia, £2 were sent back from Ethiopia to the world's banks to pay off debt.

The banking network is part of a sick system that is capitalism. We need an alternative to this system that brings famine in Africa and low wages in Ireland to feed the greed of a few.

This bulletin has been produced by the Socialist Workers Movement. We are trying to build an alternative to this system.

WE do not believe that socialist is dead—only that it has never been given a chance. We never supported Russia ans the Eastern Bloc but denounced them as state capitalist.

If you want more information on what we stand for, fill in the coupon below.

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